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Editorial

The dominance of militarists within the Macapagal-Arroyo regime poses a threat to the peace talks

The Communist Party of the Philippines welcomes the scheduled resumption of peace negotiations this coming April between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). As in the past, the Party and NDFP stand ready to uphold the fundamental national and social interests of the people, devoid of any illusion that negotiations constitute the sole or main means of achieving genuine and lasting peace.

The Party is conscious of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's counterrevolutionary dual tactics. Its declaration of "all-out peace" does not negate the basic policy of pursuing counterrevolutionary war. The revolutionary forces shall do their utmost to secure significant gains through the peace talks. Nonetheless, it is sure to confront many obstacles strewn along the way by the militarists. All their maneuvers to sabotage the negotiations must be resisted by all forces who would want the talks to succeed.



Leading the pack of militarists nestled at the top of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime are the executive secretary, Gen. Renato de Villa; former president and current "special ambassador" Gen. Fidel Ramos; and the defense secretary, Gen. Angelo Reyes. Also included in this group are at least six other generals appointed by Macapagal-Arroyo to various positions in her cabinet as well as other government posts.

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contents

- 1 **Editorial: The dominance of militarists within the Macapagal-Arroyo regime poses a threat to the peace talks**
- 3 **General Reyes: notorious fascist**
- 4 **The militarism that killed P/Clnsp. Abelardo Martin and continuing state fascism**
- 6 **Intensifying oppression and exploitation of women workers**
- 7 **Intensifying exploitation of the working class in Europe**
- 9 **News of struggle**

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The presence of these militarists in leading positions under the Macapagal-Arroyo government currently poses the main threat against the peace talks. The release of all political prisoners has continually been opposed by General de Villa. The planned and orderly release of prisoners of war by the NPA was likewise sabotaged by the militarists in a botched rescue operation on March 8.

The militarists are in a position of power within the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. Despite a prior declaration of "all-out peace" by Macapagal-Arroyo, they continue the policy of all-out war and militarization in the countryside. Even their self-declared suspension of offensive military operations has been wantonly violated.

To the militarists, revolutionaries are criminals and membership in the revolutionary movement is a crime. They will utilize all means, mainly armed suppression, to achieve the ultimate goal of crushing the revolutionary armed struggle and preserving reactionary power.

For them, the peace negotiations are useful if the latter could be used to deceive the revolutionary forces, render them passive or eventually effect the revolution's surrender. They will likewise try to achieve tactical military and political objectives.

At every turn in the peace talks, they rabidly insist on the existence of a single constitution and government in the country; and block all opportunities for the recognition of the revolutionary movement's status of belligerency.

For the peace negotiations to advance significantly under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime and in order to forge agreements under the talks' substantive agenda, all maneuvers by militarists to sabotage and collapse the negotiations must be opposed and frustrated.

The NDFP and its negotiating panel must persevere in advancing their revolutionary integrity and the national-democratic interests of the Filipino people. They must fight for the implementation of all previous agreements, including CARHRIHL.

The Party encourages all patriotic and democratic forces to be vigilant of, expose and resist, the maneuvers of the militarists against the peace talks. We must demand from Macapagal-Arroyo the ouster of the leading militarist elements within her government, especially Gen. Renato de Villa.

The NDFP's position in the negotiations and any significant gain attained from the peace talks are based on our armed revolutionary strength. With or without the peace talks, we must continue to strengthen the NPA and the revolutionary armed struggle. In the final analysis, this is the basis for achieving just and lasting peace. **AB**

Gen. Angelo Reyes: notorious fascist



DESPITE the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's declaration of an "all-out peace" policy, a notorious fascist, Gen. Angelo Reyes, was designated secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND) on March 19. The general was appointed to his new post in spite of his bloody record especially during his term as AFP chief under the Estrada regime. The present regime likewise nonchalantly ignored Reyes' shameless defense of Estrada before the president's ouster.

Before becoming AFP chief

Reyes belongs to the Philippine Military Academy's Class 1966. In his 35 years in the mercenary AFP, he rabidly served the reactionary state and US imperialism.

Reyes had a long stint in intelligence work against the revolutionary movement and the people. He was assigned to the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) in 1969. He held two high positions in the Intelligence Production Branch of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence. For a number of years, he led the AFP's intelligence operations as Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence or J2.

In 1990, he was designated commanding officer of the 4th IB. The latter was directly responsible for destructive counterrevolutionary campaigns that caused the massive displacement of people in Western Mindanao in the early 1990s. He also served as commander of the 602nd Infantry Brigade in Davao in 1992 and of the 5th ID in 1997. The latter was the main unit involved in pursuit operations against the revolutionary movement in northeastern Luzon in 1997. In 1998, he became commander of the Southern Command in Mindanao. These units have a long record of blood debts owed to the revolutionary movement and the people.

Earlier, he was assigned to the Civil Relations Service of the AFP (CRSAFP) which conducts psywar operations. He became its commanding general in 1995. Before becoming Chief of Staff, he was the commanding general of the Philippine Army.

US imperialism can count on Reyes to uphold its interests in the country. Reyes has gone to the US several times to undergo training in intelligence and "counter-insurgency". Among the courses he took up were the

Combined Strategic Intelligence Training Program and the International Defense Management Course.

Out and out fascist

Reyes fiercely used his iron fist when he became the AFP's chief of staff. He continued to implement Oplan Makabayan which was begun by his predecessor Gen. Joselin Nazareno. He also led the implementation of Campaign Plan Balangai and other campaigns of suppression.

Reyes implemented Oplan Pisces Alpha against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the US-Estrada regime's all-out anti-Moro war. He directly led the attacks on MILF camps and surrounding Moro communities. They burned down houses and destroyed crops in these communities. These resulted in the killing and wounding of civilians and in the massive dislocation of around one million people.

Under his command, the AFP used its attacks on the Abu Sayaff as a cover to intensify the anti-Moro war. In connivance with the police, the AFP perpetrated bombings in Metro Manila. Afterwards, they blamed and arrested innocent Moro civilians. The sowing of anti-Moro and anti-Muslim hysteria was further intensified under his leadership.

Reyes' intensification of attacks against the revolutionary movement and of militarization brought about widespread human rights violations not only in Mindanao but in other parts of the country as well. The AFP had a bloody record under his leadership. According to a report by KARAPATAN, there were 436 cases of human rights violation from January to November last year. In this 11-month period, there were 85 cases and 269 victims of illegal arrest; 17 cases and 39 victims of

The militarism that killed P/CInsp. Abelardo Martin and continuing state fascism

Since January, the Party and the New People's Army have stated their readiness to release prisoners of war P/Chief Insp. Abelardo Martin and Army Maj. Noel Buan. But in spite of this, militarists now dominating in the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to preempt the NPA's release of the captives.

The bungled rescue operation on March 8 resulted in the death of Martin. It also wrought havoc among the residents of Sitio Oblan, Barangay San Marcelino, General Nakar, Quezon. In order to cover up their failed operation, the AFP gave an utterly distorted version of the actual events surrounding the gunbattle between Martin's NPA custodians and government troops.

IT WAS DAWN OF MARCH 8 WHEN GEN. JOSE LACHICA, Southern Luzon Command chief, boasted of having successfully rescued prisoner Martin from the NPA. But

after having confirmed that Martin had died during the operation, they altered their story. Upon the direction of Executive Secretary Renato de Villa and then Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Lachica and Lt. Warren Lee Dagupon (leader of the 8th Scout Rangers Company [SRC] forces that attacked the NPA custodial force) concocted a series of lies. What was earlier vaunted as a triumphant rescue operation was made to look like a simple chance encounter that occurred while the military was allegedly in pursuit of the NPA.

Based on an assessment by the Melito Glor Command (MGC), the 4th Intelligence Security Unit (ISU) had already known the location of the camp of the five-man NPA team guarding Martin for a month. This formed the basis of the planned surprise attack by Dagupon's group and elements of the 4th ISU on March 8. Contrary to Dagupon's report, more than 30 and not merely 10, elements of the 8th SRC and the 4th ISU entered San Marcelino on March 6. After the early morning gunfight and upon the break of dawn on March 8, the barriofolk reported that the number of AFP ►

◄ involuntary disappearance and summary execution; and five incidents and 45 victims of massacres and attempted massacres. Aside from these, 39,000 individuals were victimized in 321 cases of indiscriminate firing, frustrated and attempted murder, abduction, illegal search, robbery, coercion, interrogation, bombing, illegal surveillance, sexual abuse, forced evacuation, destruction of property, encirclement and other forms of violence.

The CAFGU was expanded by more than 30,000 men and vigilante groups and cults like Tadtad are being rearmed. All these forces have long records of assaulting and committing abuses against the people.

Under Reyes' leadership over the AFP, American troops had, for several times, launched military exercises in different parts of the country. AFP troops took part in these exercises. Reyes led in covering up abuses

committed by foreign troops against the people.

Reyes was also one of the proponents of junking the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL and of other acts of sabotage against the peace negotiations. He played a leading role in the Government of the Republic of the Philippines' refusal to accept repeated offers by the New People's Army to release prisoners of war. He was also responsible for the bogus suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO), as well as the bungled operation to rescue PCI Abelardo Martin on March 8.

With Reyes in charge of the DND, the people will certainly suffer further fascist attacks and brutality. The revolutionary movement and the people must respond with intensified struggle to his and other military men's appointment to the bureaucracy. **AB**

troops had already grown to more than a hundred.

PART OF THE RESCUE OPERATION INVOLVED THE INFLICTION of severe fascist violence by soldiers on the residents of Sitio Oblian.

As early as the evening of March 6, a 10-man AFP squad had molested a peasant family in the area. The head of the family was forced out of his house, with an M16 pointed at his nape. He was handcuffed, made to wear a bonnet and ordered to walk ahead of the soldiers as they prodded his back with the tips of their rifles. Later, the butchers dragged another farmer out and ransacked his house. They barred the victim's family from following him outside. The soldiers aimed their guns at his genitals while forcing him to admit to being an NPA supporter. With every answer he gave, the soldiers countered with blows to his back and sides using the butts of their rifles. The fascists even threatened him before allowing him to go home.

In the evening of March 7, columns of soldiers coming from various directions gathered in Sitio Oblian to begin the attack against the hut where PCI Martin was staying. According to the MGC report, PCI Martin immediately identified himself as the first volley of gunfire rang out at around one o'clock in the morning. But the attackers kept shouting "*Hala, sige lang!*" (Just go on!) and "*Sige, banatan pa!*" (Go hit them more!). As they retreated, the members of the custodial force tried to bring along Martin, who had already been wounded in the buttocks. But they found this too difficult because of the heavy volume of gunfire from the SRC. The enemy held their fire only by around three in the morning. The SRC found Martin where the comrades had secured him. It was well into the morning when the soldiers finally brought his body down and loaded it on a dugout canoe.

Before finally leaving the area, another house was searched and robbed by the soldiers.

THE NPA ARRESTED MARTIN DURING AN OPERATION IN Dolores, Quezon in November 1999. Even then, the NPA had expressed its readiness to release Martin but this went unheeded by the Estrada regime.

For the more than one year that Martin spent in the custody of the NPA, he benefited from the latter's policy of humanely and leniently treating prisoners of war. Particularly during these past months, he was allowed to freely mingle with the masses in the barrio. He was often seen jogging along the seashore and bathing in the sea.

He received generous medical attention. In fact, a cataract in one of his eyes was surgically removed by NPA medics.

A few days before the bungled rescue operation, he had even asked some Dumagat tribespeople to make him some *pasiking* (backpacks made of rattan) and baskets to bring home to his family upon his release. These were stolen by the soldiers who carried out the failed rescue operation.

The AFP matched the NPA's benevolent treatment of PCI Martin and his forthcoming release by killing him in an utterly cruel and disastrous rescue operation.

MACAPAGAL-ARROYO DECLARED A SUSPENSION OF OFFENSIVE military operations (SOMO) in Southern Tagalog after PCI Martin's death. But it was too late. The SOMO had long been demanded by the revolutionary movement and the people.

Before this, the SOMO declaration had been obstructed by militarists within the new administration in order

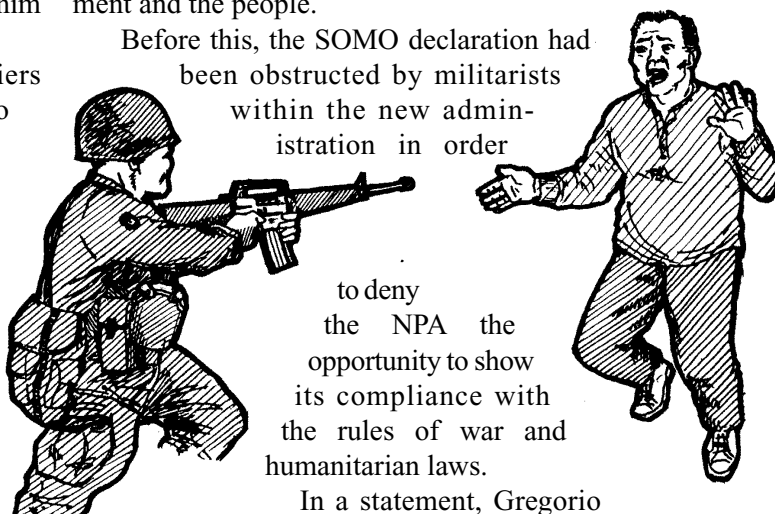
to deny the NPA the opportunity to show its compliance with the rules of war and humanitarian laws.

In a statement, Gregorio

"Ka Roger" Rosal also said that the planned rescue operation proves how ready the militarist leaders of the AFP are to sacrifice the lives of their own personnel in their rabid refusal to recognize the NPA's status as an equal entity in a civil war and their view that waging revolution is a criminal activity.

Releasing prisoners of war is part of upholding the peace talks. Despite the botched rescue operation and the killing of Martin, the revolutionary movement stands ready to continue the peace negotiations.

Similarly, the NPA remains ready to release Army Major Buan. The NPA shall carry this out in accordance with the revolutionary movement's exercise of democratic power and revolutionary rules governing the conduct of war and the treatment of prisoners, in compliance with international humanitarian law and rules of war, and in response to requests from his family, the humanitarian and peace mission and the Macapagal-Arroyo regime as well. **AB**



Intensifying exploitation and oppression of working women

On the occasion of International Working Women's Day on March 8, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo boasted that "women power is alive". Proof of this, she said, was the ascension to power of another woman president and the appointment of more women officials in her administration compared to previous regimes.

Macapagal-Arroyo called on women to manifest their power, especially in the coming polls. She likewise promised to address the issues of discrimination and violence against women by passing more laws to protect them.

These are all tokenisms; they fail to address the basic demands of the women masses. The Macapagal-Arroyo government continues to implement policies that give rise to the impoverishment of the toiling masses, including millions of women workers and peasants.

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, CONTINUING AND WIDESPREAD land-use conversion and the free dumping of agricultural products from other countries have further deprived the peasant masses of livelihood, forcing them to try their luck in urban areas. More and more of those who have been migrating to town centers and cities are young women peasants who are eventually sucked into the service sector or find themselves engaged in other informal jobs. But with even such jobs in short supply, many of them still end up unemployed.

Based on a study about the fate of peasant women and children in Southern Tagalog after the reactionary government began widespread land-use conversion under the CALABARZON project, many of them have ended up in various occupations that offer menial pay and subject them to highly exploitative working conditions. They work as caddies in golf courses set up for tourists; as domestic helpers; or as waitresses or entertainers in restaurants, karaoke bars and beerhouses.

In the towns of Leon, Tubungan and Incore in Iloilo, road-widening projects that favored "development projects" under imperialist "globalization" destroyed

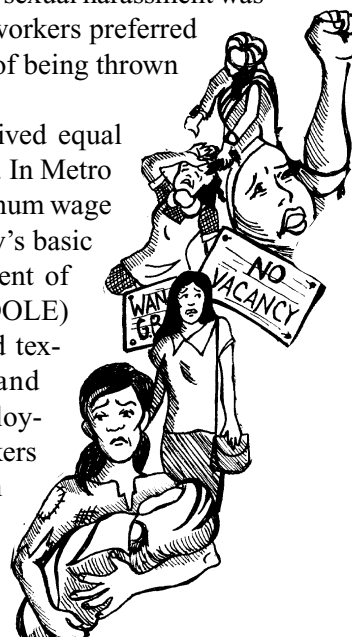
peasants' farms, crops and homes. To acquire new sources of income, women and young girls were forced to work as washerwomen, domestic helpers and salesladies in the town centers.

Some 50,000 potato farmers in Benguet have suffered the same fate. When prices of locally grown potatoes dropped by almost 50% with the dumping of machine-sliced, ready-to-fry potatoes from the US, the women turned to traditional ways of augmenting their income, such as raising animals and cultivating other cash crops like garlic. With their efforts wasted with the dumping of meat and garlic from other countries, however, they have been forced to engage in a variety of occupations for a pittance.

In the cities, the imposition of forced overtime, high quotas, the piece rate system, multi-skilling and others is rampant, more so in the export processing zones (EPZ) where the implementation of flexible labor policies is at its worst. Here, workers' labor power is squeezed to the utmost for the capitalists' maximum profit. Labor flexibilization is a terrible blow to workers in EPZs, at least 75% of whom are women. Capitalists in the EPZs prefer women workers in the belief that they are more docile and more easily intimidated and dissuaded them from joining unions and fighting for their rights.

Thus, they suffer wage discrimination and other forms of abuse. A study by the International Labor Organization has revealed that women workers on the whole are paid only 47% of what male workers receive for performing the same job. Another survey of export processing zone workers conducted by the Catholic church showed that sexual harassment was prevalent, but that women workers preferred to suffer in silence for fear of being thrown out of their jobs.

But even if they received equal pay, it would not be enough. In Metro Manila, the mandated minimum wage covers only 45% of a family's basic needs. Worse, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has exempted garments and textile exporters and retail and service establishments employing not more than 10 workers from paying the minimum wage. Women comprise the majority of workers in these factories and establishments.



Under the labor flexibilization scheme, sub-contracting and homework arrangements, especially by garments exporters, have also become common among women in the countryside. Instead of having an entire garment sewn inside a factory, capitalists contract thousands of women to sew different parts of the garment in their own homes, in exchange for measly wages. This way, capitalists are able to further depress wages, bust unions and evade labor standard laws.

Unemployment is an even bigger problem for women. Despite the fact that there are practically as many females as males in the labor force, women consistently suffer higher rates of unemployment. In 1998, doctored government statistics indicated that 9% of women were without jobs while 7% of men were unemployed. In reality, up to 50% of women aged 15 to 65 are jobless, including 13 million women who have been excluded from the labor force.

The unemployed troop not only to the towns and cities but overseas. Sixty percent (60%) of the close to seven million overseas Filipino workers are women, most of them domestic helpers and entertainers. They are forced to endure typically inhuman living and working conditions that render them vulnerable to various forms of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. In Japan, according to one study, there are about 40,000 documented Filipino dancers, but up to 150,000 Filipino women prostitutes. DOLE's Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration estimates that there are at least 1,000 Filipino prostitutes in Korea aside from about 600 Filipino women engaged in prostitution around US military bases in that country. Other countries pinpointed as destinations of Filipino women

who end up as prostitutes after being deceived by illegal recruiters are Malaysia, the Middle Eastern countries and even Italy, the Marianas and Nigeria.

These numbers continue to grow as the economic crisis worsens and the poor grasp at straws. In the first six months after the eruption of the Asian financial crisis in 1998, the number of Filipinos traveling to Japan rose by 21%. Most of them were women.

THE COMMODIFICATION AND enslavement of the toiling masses of women (who comprise 90% of Filipino women) continue to worsen. In the face of such exploitation and oppression, organized women have exhibited greater militancy.

On March 8, thousands of women marched to Malacañang

Intensifying oppression of the working class in Europe

For the past five years, the economies of Britain, France and Germany in particular, and the European Union in general, have suffered from sluggish growth rates.

Such sluggishness grows starker in the face of the much-vaunted "unprecedented growth" enjoyed by the United States in the same period. While the US gross domestic product grew by 4.2%, Europe's grew by no more than 2%. European unemployment rates stand at 9%, more than double that of the US (4%). Out of the 50 biggest companies engaged in high technology, only four are European while 36 are American. Labor productivity rose by 2.4% in the US, rising only by 1.3% in Europe. In 1999, more than 15 million people in Europe were unemployed. Most of them were from Germany (3.8 million), France (2.8 million) and Britain (1.7 million).

Lately, Europe's future has grown even dimmer. If not for the sale of licenses for new cellphone technology that provided it with a 0.3% surplus in the gross domestic product for the year 2000, it would

to demand a P125-increase in the minimum wage, which workers continue to be deprived of. The women also demanded punishment for Estrada, who implemented policies that impoverished the toiling masses.

They also demanded the release of political prisoners. There are 25 women and youth political prisoners who continue to be deprived of their freedom even under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

Because of their demands and the huge number of the toiling masses of women, the Party and the entire revolutionary movement must pay attention to, and redouble their efforts in, arousing, organizing and mobilizing the toiling masses of women as a powerful force in the national-democratic revolution. **AB**

have registered a 0.8% deficit. Industrial production posted a 1.9% decrease, especially in the production of consumer goods.

In addition, the euro (the common currency of countries in Europe) has failed to transcend its low value compared to the dollar. It is now worth 20% of its original value. In the first quarter of 2000, the current account deficit ballooned to up to 13.3 billion euro (from 7.9 billion in the third quarter). This means that more capital from trade, remittances and bank transactions left Europe compared to the amount that entered it. In the first quarter of 2000, inflation rose to 2.6% from 1.9% the previous year.

The big bourgeoisie in Europe are envious of US imperialism's lead in high technology and its ability to further maximize profits through "flexible" labor characterized by massive layoffs of workers and contractualization, pegging of wages at the very minimum and withdrawal of benefits enjoyed by the working class.

The imperialist governments in Europe in chorus with big capitalists and their propagandists, blame the sluggish growth of their economies on "pro-worker" laws inherited from previous social-democratic regimes. They wish to pave the way for labor "flexibilization" through the wholesale junking of laws that provide social security for workers, including state subsidies for the unemployed. Such measures allegedly lead to laziness and sluggishness among workers, and remove "incentives" for the unemployed to look for work.

Thus, reactionary governments have, for the past three years, been implementing the worst labor reforms in Europe to make workers "more productive". A common reform involves the implementation of longer and flexible working hours. Many companies have been allowed to intensify workloads by imposing higher quotas.

The practice of multi-skilling is also being propagated, as is employing part-time and contractual workers. In the past three years, most of the four million new jobs have been part-time and contractual in nature. In France and Germany, all or almost all of the new jobs created from 1994 to 1999 were contractual. Accompanying such "flexibility" are the absence of job security, lower wages and relatively worse working conditions.

Wages are pegged at the minimum. In the bigger countries (Britain, Germany and France), minimum wages reach up to 800-900 euro. (The minimum wage in

the US is equivalent to 1010 euro). In the more backward countries within the EU, they reach only up to 390 euro. These represent 34% to 54% of the typical wages received by European workers. If not for the continuous bargaining of unions and workers, their wages would never be raised. Nonetheless, the typical wage can not cover their daily needs according to their respective countries' standards of living.

Working conditions continue to deteriorate. More and more workers fall ill and suffer from accidents in the workplace due to intense labor flexibilization. In addition, more than 15 million workers have reported incidents of violence, sexual abuse and harassment in their factories.

Workers' benefits continue to dwindle. Corporations have been allowed exemptions in paying social security. Along with this, governments have lowered tax collections to evade obligations to provide benefits. Funds for the social welfare benefits of the unemployed and

retirees continue to suffer cuts. This has pushed the "inactive" (those in need of, but aren't looking for work), the disabled, early retirees and single parents to work. Sick-ness compensation and vacation subsidies have significantly been reduced.

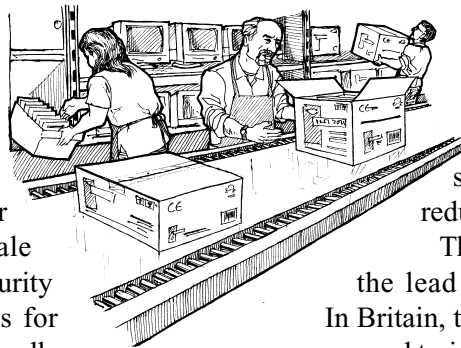
The big bourgeoisie in France are taking the lead in further impoverishing workers.

In Britain, those who refuse to join government-sponsored trainings are no longer granted subsidies.

Thus, more than 500 million workers have been deprived of subsidies and excluded in official statistics on unemployment. In Germany, the government plans to abolish the state pension system and instead pass on the responsibility to private companies.

These reforms have destroyed workers' livelihoods. While corporations are given a free hand to amass superprofits, workers are pushed to the wall and their rights violated. The cruel consequences of these reforms have compelled workers to intensify their struggle for wages and their rights. All over Europe, they continue to launch actions to assail and resist the various schemes cooked up by their respective governments. In addition, workers have been at the forefront of battles against other burdensome laws and policies.

There is fertile ground for the emergence of a genuine workers' party in the countries of Europe—a party that will fight not only for their immediate needs but advance the workers' historic role in changing the society they live in. **AB**





NEWS OF STRUGGLE

14 RIFLES SEIZED IN DAVAO DEL NORTE RAID

Fourteen high-powered rifles (M14s and M16s) were confiscated by the New People's Army (NPA) in a raid on a joint AFP/PNP detachment in Barangay Bacungan, Magsaysay, Davao del Norte on March 19. A sergeant was killed during the raid. Also wounded were two other soldiers and three police officials, including Supt. Wilfrido Cabrera.

That same day, Red fighters raided the detachment of Task Force Monkayo in Diwalwal, Compostela Valley. Killed in the raid was one policeman. The NPA assaulted Task Force Monkayo because of its gross human rights violations and its defense of the interests of big local and foreign businessmen in the area.

NPA RAIDS PNP DETACHMENT IN BORDEOS

Red fighters attacked a PNP camp at Bordes, Quezon on March 2. The NPA confiscated six assorted firearms from the police. The fighters also confiscated five VHF radios from the Kabalikat Civicom Group based in the same camp.

The three policemen manning the camp were taken by surprise and were unable to resist. The guerrillas took advantage of the fact that the PNP's communication lines were down. Bad weather also made it more difficult for the police to escape or call for reinforcements.

BUAN TO BE RELEASED—NDF

Comrade Luis Jalandoni, head of the NDFP Negotiating Panel, ordered on March 16 the release of prisoner of war Maj. Noel Buan. Accordingly, the NDFP also declared

a ceasefire in seven provinces in Southern Tagalog from March 17 to April 11 to pave the way for Buan's release.

In a letter ordering the release of Buan, Comrade Jalandoni stated that the release of the prisoner of war shall be carried out on the basis of a decision by the National Executive Committee of the NDFP, in the name of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the organs of political power of the democratic people's government and in abidance with the Geneva Conventions, its protocols and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL.

Comrade Jalandoni also said that "the democratic people's government has once again stressed and proven its status of belligerency in its capacity to take a prisoner of war under its care for a long period of time and accord him humane treatment and respect for his rights."

He said that the NDFP received on March 14 and 15 copies of the PNP's SOPO and the AFP's SOMO. He added that the Melito Glor Command is set to pass Major Buan on to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC shall in turn hand Buan over to his family, with the help of other groups and individuals.

MINING PROJECT IN MINDORO OPPOSED

Residents of Victoria, Oriental Mindoro strongly opposed the plan of Canadian firm Crew Minerals Philippines (CMP) to conduct mining in the area.

In a rally held in the last week of February, the residents of the adjacent municipalities of Victoria, Naujan,

Socorro and Pinamalayan opposed the exploration being conducted by the CMP, which has caused flooding in these towns. The rally was joined by thousands of farmers, fisherfolk, national minorities, students, teachers, church workers, environmentalists and members of non-government organizations. They said that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources hastily granted a permit to the Aglubang Mining corp., a close associate of the CMP, without conducting any consultation with the residents.

The residents are planning to put up barricades to prevent mining machinery from entering the area. They added that they could follow the example of Antipolo City and Semirara residents who put up barricades and were able to prevent government's plan to dump garbage in their area.

VILLANUEVA AND REYES APPOINTMENTS ASSAILED

Militant organizations assailed Macapagal-Arroyo's choice of Lt. Gen. Diomedio Villanueva as new Armed Forces of the Philippines chief and the appointment of retired general and former AFP chief Angelo Reyes as new defense secretary.

According to the Moro Christian People's Alliance, Villanueva was the chief of the Southern Command when the all-out war in Mindanao, which destroyed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, was carried out. The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) meanwhile stated that Villanueva's appointment ran counter to the Macapagal-Arroyo government's declaration of a "peace policy".

In a separate statement, Bayan condemned Reyes' appointment to a

civilian post, saying that this provided further proof that the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is highly militarized.

OUST LACSON'S PUPPETS IN THE PNP—PAMALAKAYA

The Pambansang Samahan ng mga Mamalakaya (Pamalakaya) demanded the immediate and unconditional ouster of police generals campaigning for Panfilo Lacson for senator. According to Pamalakaya, the officials' politicking proves that they are "full-time members of the Estrada-Lacson

conspiracy", and must no longer remain in power.

Pamalakaya likewise condemned the continued presence of Estrada and Lacson henchmen who hold sensitive posts under the new regime. They also called on the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to seriously pursue the investigation against Estrada, Lacson and their cohorts for gross human rights violations and other crimes.

Some of the officials who should be ousted were identified by Pamalakaya as Chief Supt. Jose Ayap

of the Ilocos PNP Regional Office; Chief Supt. Tiburcio Fusillero, chief of the PNP Central Visayas regional office; Chief Supt. Dominador Domingo, chief of the PNP Central Mindanao regional office; Senior Supt. Gregorio Dolina, chief of the PNP Southern Mindanao regional office; Renato Paredes, Traffic Management Group director; Chief Supts. Romeo and Reynaldo Acop; Director Victor Batac; and Senior Supts. Caesar Mancao, Michael Ray Aquino and Diosdado Valeroso.

NEWS FROM EASTERN VISAYAS

21 firearms seized by NPA in Samar

Twenty-one, and not 15, firearms were confiscated by the NPA in a raid against a patrol base of the 34th IB in Barangay Babaclayon, San Jose de Buan, Samar on February 12. According to the latest correspondence reports from the Efren Martires Command (EMC), one M60 machine gun, one M203 grenade launcher, eight M16 armalites, seven M14 rifles, two cal .45 pistols, two cal .38 revolvers, a set of communication radios, ammunition and other military equipment were confiscated by the NPA. Eight (not seven) enemy troops were killed and four (not five) were wounded during the assault.

According to the EMC, the NPA raided the 34th IB's detachment because of its long list of crimes against the peasant masses and the revolutionary movement. "The latest was an attack on comrades in the Matuguinao area where five were killed," stated the EMC. It added that the fascists raped a woman comrade before killing her. The same troops also murdered an elderly farmer in Barangay Canbais in December, aside from committing other abuses.

The EMC belied claims by the enemy that the NPA fired at soldiers who had surrendered. They also condemned military reports stating that the NPA hacked the bodies of the slain troopers, and clarified that NPA principles prohibit the desecration of dead enemy soldiers.

Said the EMC: "The Macapagal-Arroyo government is no different... from the US-Estrada regime." It declared that the NPA shall continue advancing the democratic revolution until genuine freedom and democracy are achieved. **AB**

NEWS FROM THE ILOCOS-CORDILLERA REGION

SIX ENEMY FORCES WERE KILLED and four were wounded in two firefights in the Ilocos-Cordillera Region in December 2000 and January 2001.

According to correspondence reports, five soldiers were killed and two were wounded when a unit of the NPA Leho Cawilan Command in Kalinga ambushed troops of the 21st IB in Barangay Gawaan, Balbalan, Kalinga on January 22. Among those killed was troop leader 1Lt. Bienvenido Bermal.

The soldiers were returning from an operation when ambushed by the NPA. The firefight lasted for 20 minutes. There was no casualty on the side of the NPA.

The people in the area rejoiced over the successful tactical offensive. Philippine Army units previously deployed in Kalinga (such as the 45th and 48th IBs) were all abusive and despised by the masses. But of all the troops assigned in Kalinga, the masses consider the 21st IB as the most abusive and most ruthless. It was named Best Battalion of the AFP from 1995-98.

Before this, a CAFGU member was killed in a clash on December 13, 2000 between a team of the NPA Agustin Begnalen Command and troops belonging to the 17th IB who were conducting an operation in Boliney, Abra. Another CAFGU member and a soldier were wounded in the same encounter. There was no casualty on the NPA side.

According to reports, the enemy troops who were frightened out of their wits and caught by surprise, scampered in various directions. They left the body of the slain CAFGU element behind, showing utter disregard for their own personnel, especially those

of lower rank. The slain CAFGU was merely reported as “missing in action”. Relatives who searched for him found his body abandoned at the scene of the encounter.

The NPA also exposed the 21st IB’s scheme of forcing parents of suspected Red fighters into signing bogus certificates stating that their children were minors, even if they were of age. The parents of three young men from Apatan, Pinukpuk, Kalinga were forced to sign a “certificate” that their children, whom the troops suspected to have joined the NPA, were merely 14-16 years of age. **AB**

NEWS FROM CAGAYAN VALLEY

Reactionary politics in Isabela assailed

The Benito Tesorio Front (BTF) of northeastern Isabela assailed the dominance of dynasties of warlords, big landlords and bureaucrat capitalists in reactionary politics in Isabela.

In a statement dated March 3, Ka Delio Baladon, spokesperson of the Benito Tesorio Command of the NPA, said that those who have long been dominating politics in Isabela such as the Dy and Albano families, shall remain in power. However, he said, the voices of poor farmers, farm workers and other marginalized folk who constitute the majority in the province, will again be hardly heard. Furthermore, Baladon said that politicians who promote dirty and violent elections and governance fraught with anomalies and corruption shall flourish.

Baladon stressed that because of this, the correctness of the revolutionary movement’s principle that the oppressed masses can attain political power only by means of people’s war, shall become ever clearer.

Nonetheless, said Baladon, the revolutionary movement shall try to influence the elections for the people’s benefit. The Benito Tesorio Front also called on candidates in the province to include the following in their platforms of governance:

- o Immediate prosecution and punishment of Joseph Estrada and his cohorts for plunder and other crimes against the people;
- o Opposition to the establishment of the CAFGU; and
- o Opposition to government projects that are anti-peasant, anti-worker and anti-people, such as mining by giant corporations.

Candidates and parties that shall advocate these issues, said Baladon, will reap the support of tens of thousands from the revolutionary mass base, including

thousands of voters, in eastern Isabela. He said that they would also be permitted to campaign in the territories of the democratic people’s government.

On the other hand, said Baladon, candidates who are anti-people and active in counterrevolutionary campaigns of the AFP will not be allowed to campaign inside guerilla zones and will be meted appropriate punishment.

AFP’s deception regarding “witnesses” condemned

The BTF exposed the AFP’s deception regarding the alleged testimony of Jay-Ar “Ka CJ” Bulusan, a prisoner of war, against students Kerima Tariman and Eric Amodo. Tariman and Amodo were captured last year in Echague, Isabela, and slapped with trumped-up charges of illegal possession of firearms. With these cases about to be dismissed in court, the AFP decided to present Ka CJ as an “NPA commander” who shall stand as witness against Tariman and Amodo. This, despite the military’s prior declaration that Ka CJ was a new recruit.

In a related development, a man posing as Ka CJ was made to speak on the radio against the NPA. Prior to this, a woman posing as Sheryll “Ka Andrea” Arcilla also spoke over the radio. “Ka Andrea” was captured in June 2000 at Barangay Linumot, Jones. She escaped from prison in January.

Antimining group founded

PUMALAG or People’s Union Against Mining and Landgrabbing, was launched at the Isabela State University in Echague, Isabela on March 6. More than 200 peasant leaders from mining sites in Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya participated in the launching.

The activity was led by a local chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas in Isabela, KALIKASAN, Center for Environmental Concerns, progressive organizations, church workers and other middle forces.

Prior to this, residents of Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya attended a national mass action against foreign mining held on March 5 at the Mendiola Bridge. Didipio is one of the barrios operated in by ARIMCO Mining, a giant Australian company conducting exploration in the area.

In a related development, around 200 people staged a picket on February 23 in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya to oppose mining by ARIMCO. They picketed a meeting of the Regional Development Council (RDC) of Cagayan Valley.

Three bishops, namely Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan of the Archdiocese of Tuguegarao (Cagayan), Bishop Sergio Utleg of the Diocese of Ilagan (Isabela) and Bishop Ramon Villena of the Diocese of Bayombong (Nueva Vizcaya) as well as other priests in Cagayan Valley joined the picket. **AB**